

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

\* \* \* \* \*

In the Matter of

THE COMPLAINT OF MR. TROY E. )  
BLACKBURN, INEZ, KENTUCKY )  
AGAINST COLUMBIA GAS OF )  
KENTUCKY, INC. )

CASE NO.  
8479

O R D E R

On March 1, 1982 the Commission received a letter (Appendix "A") from Troy E. Blackburn, Inez, Kentucky concerning a bill he had received in the amount of \$904.17 from Columbia Gas of Kentucky, Inc. ("Columbia Gas"). Following a service interruption in the area Columbia Gas personnel discovered a gas leak on Mr. Blackburn's service line which extends approximately 350 feet from his meter (located near the main distribution line) to his residence.

Columbia Gas reads customer meters bi-monthly, and records indicate that Mr. Blackburn's bill was calculated for two months and 23 days.

By letter received February 22, 1982 (Appendix "B") Columbia Gas advised the Commission that it would adjust the account of Mr. Blackburn by \$372.84 which would leave a balance of \$531.33.

Mr. Blackburn has requested a hearing with respect to this matter.

The Commission, having considered the correspondence and being advised, HEREBY ORDERS That this matter be and it hereby is

set for hearing on the 22nd day of April, 1982, at 1:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, in the Commission's offices at Frankfort, Kentucky.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED That Columbia Gas shall appear at the hearing and present testimony relative to this matter.

Done at Frankfort, Kentucky, this 24th day of March, 1982.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

  
For the Commission

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

RECEIVED

MAR 1 1982

February 24, 1982

DIVISION OF UTILITY  
ENGINEERING & SERVICES

Dear Mr. Fleman:

I am writing this letter in regards to a gas bill, that I received from Columbia Gas, last Sept. This bill was in the amount of \$904.17.

I bought this place and moved her last June. I was here six weeks when we found out that we had a gas leak.

There was a break in the main gas line, so Columbia gas had to turn the gas off in order to fix their lines, when they returned in the evening to turn everyone's gas on they found we had a leak, by how fast the meter was turning. The men from Columbia Gas told me that they had taken a meter reading and that the bill would run around \$900.00 or maybe a little more.

My wife asked Mr. Rogel Burchett, an employee of Columbia Gas, if they had of read the meter when they were suppose to would they have been able to detect the trouble. Mr. Burchett answered yes. So my wife told Mr. Burchett that they should read their meters regularly. So this would keep their customers from having to pay out more money for gas that was just running in the ground.

Mr. Burchett got mad, told us that he didn't have to do any favors for us, so he was pulling the meter. If he had left the meter a few hours, I would have been able to find the leak instead I was unable to dig the line up, because I had just had an accident, cutting off two toes. I was on crutches. So I had no other choice but to lay a whole new gas line, costing me \$650.00. I have been paying

my gas bill regularly, all except  
for the \$904.17.

I have send Copies of my  
gas bills to your office showing  
that there was a period of  
nearly three months that my  
bill was estimated, and all of  
this time there was gas running  
out into the ground that I'm  
having to pay for.

I feel that Columbia Gas  
has a responsibility to read  
these meters on time, preventing  
this problem.

Columbia Gas send us a  
letter in December saying pay  
the bill or we will turn  
your gas off. So I contacted  
your office. With the help of  
Mr. Jesse Oak, Columbia Gas  
offered to cut the bill  $\frac{1}{3}$ .

But still \$531.00 is to much  
when they are really at fault for  
not reading the meter. They have  
a responsibility as well as we do.  
If they would realize this we

Customers wouldn't have this kind  
of a problem. If I had used  
this gas I would have paid  
this bill without any question.  
They were negligent and shouldn't  
ask me to pay for their mistakes.

I received another letter from  
the Gas Company yesterday. A copy  
of a letter that was sent to Mr.  
Cobb, saying that they were plan-  
ning on cutting our gas off.

I have talked to Columbia  
Gas several times trying to reason  
with them, but all I get is pay  
up or we shut off your gas.

I have explained everything  
in detail, and I have also  
shown that Columbia Gas was  
negligent in reading the meter, by  
sending copies of my gas bills  
to your office. So I am request-  
ing a hearing on this matter.

Thank you  
Iroy Blackburn Jr.

February 12, 1982

RECEIVED

FEB 22 1982

Mr. Jesse C. Oak, Assistant Director  
Division of Utility Engineering  
and Services  
Public Service Commission  
P. O. Box 615  
Frankfort, KY 40602

DIVISION OF UTILITY  
ENGINEERING & SERVICES

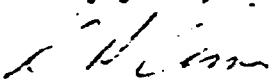
Dear Mr. Oak:

On January 12, 1982 Mr. J. B. Bowman, Division Manager in Ashland, wrote a letter to Mr. Troy E. Blackburn, Inez, and explained that we were adjusting his account by an amount equal to \$312.51 and also an amount of \$60.33 representing a fast meter refund credit, making a revised adjusted account balance of \$531.33. A copy of Mr. Bowman's letter is attached. You will please note that Mr. Bowman enclosed to Mr. Blackburn a carbon copy of his letter asking that Mr. Blackburn sign and return the carbon copy to him as an acknowledgement and agreement that he would pay the adjusted balance.

As of this date Mr. Bowman has not heard from Mr. Blackburn and I feel that 30 days is a reasonable length of time for Mr. Blackburn to acknowledge the arrangements outlined in Mr. Bowman's letter. Therefore, I feel that without Mr. Blackburn's agreement, we must maintain a previous balance of \$904.17 less the fast meter refund credit of \$60.33 and a total previous balance of \$833.84 and place Mr. Blackburn's account in line for collections under our current collection procedures which could result in the discontinuance of gas service.

We feel that we have fulfilled the request of the Commission as stipulated in your letter of December 28, 1981; however, if you feel you would like to discuss this matter further with Mr. Bowman or myself, please feel free to contact us.

Very truly yours,

  
Robert N. Ames  
District Manager

JBB/RNA/k

Attachment

cc: Troy E. Blackburn